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ABSTRACT

Student activities, or what used to be termed extracurricular activities, is now being called by another term--third curriculum. Third curriculum is the most recent term used to describe a wide variety of school-sponsored teams, clubs, and organizations. Several aspects of the third curriculum are detailed: (1) need for student activities; (2) success and student activities; (3) participants versus nonparticipants; (4) social development; (5) student attitudes; (6) beyond high school; (7) community attitudes; (8) participants; (9) activities that draw a crowd; (10) reasons students participate; (11) nonparticipants; (12) leadership and student activities; and (13) administrator's role. (34 references) (SI)

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ED 314846

THE THIRD CURRICULUM

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

BY NANCY A. BIERNAT & EDWARD J. KLESSE

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EA 021 535

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

The Third Curriculum: Student Activities

by Nancy A. Biernat and
Edward J. Klesse

National Association of Secondary School Principals
Division of Student Activities
Reston, Virginia

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Foreword

"Student activities" have been called by many names over the years, and while the definition of "curriculum" historically has caused much debate, the appropriate title recognizing student activities lacks universal acceptance. The term, "extracurricular activities," an old term, gives the impression that they are outside the curriculum, but, as we enter the 1990s, student activities are recognized as a major part of the total school program.

The "Third Curriculum"—first termed by Robert W. Frederick—seems to be the best title, as it infers two additional curricula. The first is the coursework required to earn a high school diploma. The second curriculum allows for student choice, exploration, and specialization that include the electives that our students study to prepare for post-secondary study or work. Student activities represent a wide variety of school-sponsored teams, clubs, and organizations. Research reveals that it is in these activities that students learn most of the carry-over skills for adult life. While participating in student activities, our young adults learn critical lessons in leadership, followership, character, communications, teamwork, decision-making, self-worth, and individual potential. It is this level of learning that is called the Third Curriculum.

Dale D. Hawley
Director, Division of Student
Activities, NASSP

Why Student Activities?

Be true to your own art, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant and broken the monotony of a decourous age. It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person: Always do what you are afraid to do.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

As stated in *Managing Student Activities* by Douglas Christensen, it is in student activities that students discover something "strange and extravagant"—themselves. Personalities emerge. Talents are uncovered. Friendships are made, and leaders realized.

Not only do students who participate in cocurricular activities do better academically, but they also develop other facets of their personalities in the process. Self-esteem, self-confidence, social cooperation, and leadership skills are just a few of the cognitive factors that are affected. Cocurricular activities allow students to blend various aspects of their academic learning into personal action, according to Allison (1979).

Indeed, it is the never-ending job of the adviser to guide, encourage, and advise students to take that first tenuous step toward more challenging leadership roles. As advisers, we witness firsthand students who are willing to dare to be different and break that monotony. In turn, we need to take that risk ourselves so that we can grow and succeed in our ever-demanding roles as advisers.

The purpose of Christensen's 1984 study was to examine the "Six *W's* " of student activities and student leadership:

- WHY are student activities important?
- WHO participates?
- In WHAT do students participate?

- WHEN do they participate?
- WHERE do they participate?

Last, and most significant,

- WHAT of it?

Indeed, what is the relationship of these factors that make student activities and student leadership vital forces in our schools? A review of the literature supports the belief that there is a definite link between cocurricular participation and high school success, success in college, and future success in careers and the community.

It is important to note that cocurricular activities are certainly not new in our schools. Cuccia (1981) places a time perspective on the subject. Cocurricular activities in the high school have become a fixed characteristic of the educational system. Although sporadically reappraised, the original rationale and functions have remained essentially intact and have played a critical role in civic and social education in the American high school for more than 60 years.

Cocurricular activities, as an integral part of the educational system, seem to be accomplishing their intended function. Activities provide students with a mechanism to develop their participatory skills. Although participation in cocurricular activities can be somewhat limited due to various organizational policies, many students derive benefits that lead to positive adult behavior (Cuccia, 1981).

Correlating activities with academics, Allison (1979) makes a case for the integration of academics with cocurricular activities to achieve a practical balance.

The original purpose of student activities was to give students an opportunity to blend the various aspects of their academic learning into personal action. Life has no academic majors, yet we exist in an intellectually integrated society and we teach in segmented academic divisions.

Student activities offer young people a place to try out their academic skills in an eclectic, community-like environment. Here is the making of values and personalities that no single classroom can ever offer. We offer active and real challenges. We have decisions to make and problems to solve that involve the real possibility of success or failure. In all, intra-curricular programs (intra-disciplinary learning) develop, and the central theme remains the same: Use activities to educate for wholeness in human behavior.

The legitimate social aspects of the student activities program can also involve academics. Social events, such as Homecoming, can have co-sponsoring departments. The home economics department can prepare food, the art department can make decorations, the music department can locate entertainment, and the English department can write the theme. The primary objectives of the student activities *department* promote teaching the eclectic nature of learning, the skills and responsibilities of leadership, the balance of human talents, the use of self-motivation, the importance of community, and the necessity of compassion, to name a few.

Success and Student Activities

Research studies have consistently shown that participation in student activities is beneficial to students (Christensen, 1984). Success in college (achievement) can be more accurately predicted from levels of individual achievement in such activities as debate, speech, drama, and journalism, than it can from any or all of the following:

1. Grades in high school
2. Class rank
3. ACT or SAT scores
4. Grades in college.

Similarly, studies of school dropouts have consistently shown that students who leave school prior to graduation are students who are unlikely to participate in student activities. In short, cocurricular activities play a vital role on campus—they improve school climate, they teach valuable lessons in leadership, and they serve as a creative outlet that cannot be attained inside the classroom.

In terms of high school success and cocurricular activities, the *Bulletin—Office of Educational Research & Improvement* (Dept. of Education, 1986), provided results of its study of cocurricular activity participation. The Center for Statistics sponsored the longitudinal study, "High School and Beyond" that was used as the data source for all estimates. The estimates of earned coursework credits and grade-point averages were based on high school transcripts; all other estimates were based on the questionnaire responses and test scores for 1980 sophomores who were seniors in 1982.

Students who ranked high on four related performance measures (course credits, hours of homework, test scores, and grade averages) tended to be more involved in cocurricular activities. In fact, the more activities students were involved in, the higher they ranked. Students who reported participation in at least 4 of the 11 activities (varsity athletics, cheerleading—pep club majorettes, debating or drama, band or orchestra, chorus or dance, hobby clubs, honorary clubs, school newspapers or magazines, school subject-matter clubs, student council-student government, vocational education clubs) in contrast to those who were *not* involved in any, earned 24 percent more credits in the "new basics"; were considerably more likely to have spent at least 3 hours per week on homework; and were only one-third as likely to have had a GPA of 2.0 or less. While participation in cocurricular activities does not guarantee improved performance as a student, it is clear that cocurricular activities are attracting many bright, high-performing students.

Participants vs. Non-Participants

In addition, the Minnesota State High School League (1984) found that students who participate in cocurricular activities generally have better grade-

point averages and attendance records than students who do not participate in the activities. The survey, based on responses from 305 of the league's 500 member schools, found that the grade-point average for all students in the 1982-83 school year stood at 2.68, which is about a C+. Student athletes as a group, however, averaged 2.84, which put them in the B− category. Students participating in fine arts—drama, speech, debate, or music—averaged 2.98, or about a B.

The attendance report showed that the absentee rate for all students was 8.76 days for the 1982-83 school year, compared with 7.44 for student athletes and 6.94 for participants in other league-sanctioned activities.

Similarly, Slotz (1984) supported these findings in a recent survey of grades given to roughly 24,000 students. His data once again agreed with the results of most past research. The 1,550 students who participated on organized athletic teams during the 1982-83 school year achieved an average GPA of 2.67 on a 4-point scale (roughly B−), while the 4,553 non-participating students averaged 2.12 (about a C). The difference between the two groups of students from the three district high schools is statistically significant at a very high level of confidence.

Slotz's paper also examined two aspects of student-athlete participation and achievement that have not received much attention in previous studies. The first deals with eligibility criteria and their effects on participation, the *second* with the way participation actually affects a student's grades. A student is ruled ineligible to compete if he or she fails two or more courses during a term or if his or her GPA is below 1.0 (D).

During the 1982-83 season, 150 student-athletes in the district failed two or more school subjects, roughly 10 percent, and were ruled ineligible based upon this criterion alone. It is noteworthy that the majority of students receiving two or more F's were younger students in the lower grades (freshmen, sophomores). The second criterion for eligibility (maintenance of at least a D average by student athletes) was attained by 99 percent of the student-athletes in this same district during the 1982-83 school year. No juniors or seniors on athletic teams had earned less than a D average, and only 20 freshmen and sophomores did so.

What effect would raising the minimum average from D to C, as is being recommended by some, have on a participant's eligibility? In this district, a total of 285 student-athletes earned cumulative GPAs of less than 2.0 during the 1982-83 school year. That number constitutes roughly 18 percent of all students participating in interscholastic sports. It is important to note that 45 percent of those students having GPAs below 2.0 were freshmen and 27 percent were sophomores.

A different, but related question concerns the way active competition influences grades. Specifically, do student-athletes' grades drop during competition, as compared to their work during the "off-season"? Academic records available for athletes in this district during the 1982-83 school

year revealed that more failing grades (Fs) were received when *not* participating on a team than when actively competing. In short, participation in sports, per se, does not adversely affect a student's work during the competitive season. In fact, the opposite is true. Students fail proportionately fewer times when actually competing than during the "off-season."

The following three conclusions should be noted:

1. Participants in interscholastic sports, in this district, achieve higher academic averages than non-participating students.
2. If academic eligibility requirements were raised, large numbers of students would likely continue to be eligible to participate.
3. Students seem to do better academic work during terms when they are actually competing in sports than when they are not.

Vocations, as well, were positively affected by student participation in vocational organizations according to Smith and others (1984). Studies were conducted to determine the goals of five organizations for high school vocational students and the extent to which local clubs are meeting these goals and developing effective skills and leadership abilities through appropriate activities. Survey questionnaires were developed and administered to many local chapters of the following organizations: Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), Future Homemakers of America/Home Economics Related Occupations (FHA-HERO), and the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA). This report summarizes separately the findings of each of the five surveys (which, in general, found the clubs to be instilling leadership qualities in their members and conducting activities that are acceptable to them).

Activities at Other Levels

It was not solely high school students who were affected by cocurricular activities. Students in junior high school who were involved in activities also realized a benefit in cocurricular participation, as seen in Parish's (1984) study. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of participation in junior high school cocurricular activities to academic performance and educational aspirations, and whether these relationships varied according to participants' socioeconomic status (SES), gender, ethnicity, or intelligence quotient (IQ). The subjects were a random sample of 501 eighth graders from seven junior high schools of a west Texas school district.

It was concluded that participation in cocurricular activities was associated with high GPA and high educational aspirations. These associations were relatively weak, but statistically significant. The pattern of relationships varied according to the participants' gender, ethnicity, SES, and IQ. There was no evidence that cocurricular participation was associated with lower GPA or lower educational aspirations for any group.

In terms of the size of the high school, Levy (1982) examined the effects of cocurricular activities in small high schools. The study focused on 21 secondary schools in northwestern Ohio. The sample included 420 students in these schools. The study data were gathered during the summer of 1979. Only those students who had participated in eight or more activities were considered for the participants' group, and only those students with no activities were considered for the non-participants' group. Students were randomly selected from these two groups for the study.

Analysis of the data revealed that academic achievement in required courses seemed to be related positively to participation in cocurricular activities. However, the long-range effects on the four-year grade-point average showed no significant differences between the participants in cocurricular activities and the non-participants. When the interaction of students' and teachers' personalities were minimized by standardized test results, there were no significant adjusted mean differences in academic achievement between the two groups.

The correlation between cocurricular activities and academic success was significant, but the benefits extended to areas other than purely academic ones. Cognitive domains such as self-esteem, self-concept, and socialization were also positively affected by participation in cocurricular activities. Nover (1981) deals with the role of involvement and socialization, attempting to determine the role cocurricular involvement plays in adolescent socialization. A questionnaire was administered to 293 students during a class period in their New England high school. The results provided a clear-cut portrait of which students become involved—students from high SES families and twelfth graders. Student involvement was found to be significantly related to school experience and performance, including academic success. Some support was found for considering involvement as a mediating variable.

Social Development

Erbeck (1961) states that participation allowed more occasion for social cooperation. Erbeck further stated that if the purpose of education is to develop within students those things that result in their being "good citizens" and if their life and living shall reflect all those things that make for good citizenship, then we see in the cocurriculum the ideal training and testing ground.

In the cocurriculum are many activities that round out the product of the traditional school, and many times these areas of knowledge and these stores of information find practical use. The assumption of responsibility is made a worthwhile aim; in the cocurriculum is to be found no end of occasions and opportunities for such action. Social cooperation is fostered in the many activities that make up the curriculum.

Development of desirable social attitudes and cooperation through participation in student activities was also reported by Gholson and

Buser (1983). One of the objectives of extra-class activities is to help educate young people for citizenship through experiences and insights that stress leadership, fellowship, cooperation, and independent action. In a 1973 study of 2,000 Illinois secondary school students, 49 percent stated that one reason for participating in student activity programs was "to develop leadership activities" (tied for 7th place). In a 1975 study of 2,500 students from throughout the United States, 91 percent stated that one reason for participating in student activity programs was "to develop leadership activities" (6th most frequently stated reason).

The development of desirable social attitudes on the part of individuals and groups represents another basic principle of activity programs. Cooperation and understanding among social, racial, and ethnic groups in the student body as well as in out-of-school life is another worthwhile characteristic of the activity program. A most basic expectation of the activity program is the degree to which students share responsibility for selecting, organizing, and evaluating the program and its outcomes. Finally, the development of democratic and cooperative values is a primary principle of the extra-class program.

Indeed, students and teachers alike perceived the significant worth of participation in cocurricular activities in terms of socialization and other factors (Hamilton, 1959). The study, which was conducted at the University of Texas, was based on the premise that those persons directly connected with cocurricular programs are best able to assess their educational worth. Twenty-four accredited high schools, 12 each for white and black pupils, in three different-sized communities were chosen at random to participate in the study. Two appraisal sheets, both employing identical criteria but different in form, were constructed for use by two populations in each school. A total of 2,060 usable returns were received from pupils and 180 from teachers.

Both groups were asked to assess the educational worth of cocurricular participation in the total school experience. A cocurricular activity was defined as any organized and sponsored group endeavor not yielding graduation credit, such as clubs, athletics, assembly, homeroom, editorial staffs, choir, and band. A review of mean ratings revealed that pupils and teachers alike rate the cocurriculum as possessing "more than average value" for meeting those needs pertaining to socialization, mental health, reasoning, guidance, and preparation for further education. With respect to youth needs pertaining to physical health, living in the natural and scientific environments, occupation, and use of leisure time, both groups assessed the cocurriculum as having "average value."

What Do Students Say?

In "An Analysis of the United States High School Seniors' Extracurricular Participation as Predicted by Self-Concept, Socioeconomic Status, Sex, Race,

and Time Spent at Work," Peterson (1984) examined a number of variables and their effects. The research explored five levels of student activity participation: as a leader two or more times, as a leader or member, as a member two or more times, as a member one or more times, and as a non-participant. The empirical base for the study consisted of senior student data of the "High School and Beyond" survey collected in early 1980 by the National Opinion Research Center. That sample represented 1,015 schools in the United States and resulted in a sample of 19,127 seniors.

The results indicated that self-concept was significantly related to all five student activity participation categories. Sex was found to be predictive of four of the five categories of participation, especially that of membership two or more times. Race was a significant predictor of the category "membership two or more times" only. In contrast to what is stated in the literature, hours spent at work per week was not found to be a significant predictor of student activity participation.

The added factor of discipline was investigated by Krone (1985). This study explores the relationship between a student's level of participation in cocurricular activities and the educational outcomes of achievement and discipline problems. The data yielded strong positive correlations between both measures of participation and the measure of academic achievement. Strong negative correlations were obtained between both participation measures and the three measures of discipline problems. The study proved the relationship between participation in cocurricular activities and the outcomes of achievement and discipline, but failed to establish self-esteem as the theoretical linkage.

It was evident that participation in cocurricular activities affected many variables within a school and that the school itself benefited greatly from the positive outcome that involvement produces.

Subsequently, the positive effects of student involvement enhanced college success as well as future success in the community.

Significantly, the students themselves perceived participation as essential in developing skills that would assist them beyond high school. This was shown in Baker's (1985) study, in which principals from 500 high schools in the United States and Canada were asked to choose five students who were very active in student activities. The students were asked to complete a survey relating to the benefits of student activity participation. Approximately 1,400 student surveys were returned from 300 schools. More than 90 percent of the students reported being involved in student council or student/class government. Almost as many participated in athletics or an athletic-related club such as pep or spirit club, cheerleading, and pom-pon. Nearly 60 percent of the students were involved in a fine arts activity, including music, art, theater and drama, debate and forensics. More than 50 percent of the students were involved in an academic or subjected-related club such as math and science clubs, foreign language clubs, and vocational clubs. Social, service, and special interest clubs had the least reported membership, with about 40 percent participation.

Eighty percent of the students indicated that they had held leadership positions in their student council, student government, or in their class; 60 percent reported that they had held leadership positions on athletic teams or in athletics-related organizations. Approximately 45 percent of the students who participated in subject-related clubs or on publications staffs had held leadership positions.

Students were asked to respond on a five-point scale as to what extent participation in student activities had helped them to develop the qualities that have been determined to be essential to effective leadership, and that could be used in life beyond high school. The qualities and the results are listed below.

Self-development

Develop my emotional well-being
Develop my physical health
Accept responsibility for my activities
Gain confidence in my own abilities
Accept criticism from faculty members and peers
Cope more effectively with stressful situations

Not at all	0.2 percent
Somewhat	70.0 percent
Greatly	29.9 percent

Interpersonal skills

Communicate more effectively with others
Work more effectively with others in completing tasks
Recognize and reinforce the contributions of others
Accept compliments with a thank you

Not at all	0.3 percent
Somewhat	57.9 percent
Greatly	41.7 percent

Organizational skills

Improve my problem-solving skills
Plan and organize more effectively
Plan and conduct meetings
Understand and utilize parliamentary procedure
Delegate duties and responsibility to others

Not at all	0.7 percent
Somewhat	80.4 percent
Greatly	18.7 percent

Leadership skills

Set goals and follow through with them
Improve leadership skills
Take identified risks in order to achieve an important goal
Evaluate activities and projects more effectively
Take initiative to begin and complete a task
Manage time more wisely

Not at all	0.3 percent
Somewhat	66.7 percent
Greatly	33.0 percent

Preparation-for-life skills

For life as a good citizen because of my involvement in
For work and career after graduation because of my involvement in
To meet the challenges of higher education because of my involvement in
For wise use of leisure time by
For leadership roles after graduation
I believe that I am learning to demonstrate the values of honesty, courtesy, respect, and fair play because of my involvement in

Classes	0.2 percent
Mostly classes	4.2 percent
Classes & activities	84.6 percent
Mostly activities	10.6 percent
Activities only	0.3 percent

Beyond High School

Onkle's (1968) study explores the attitudes held by recent high school graduates toward the carry-over value of those activities currently found in high school cocurricular programs. Four groups of Affton High School graduates (classes of 1963, 1964, and 1965—834 students) were surveyed: (1) college students, (2) permanently employed, (3) males, and (4) females.

Through analysis and statistical treatment of the data, Onkle found that less than 1 percent of the sample indicated a *strongly unfavorable* over-all attitude toward the values they believed were attained through participation in cocurricular activities. A total of 29 percent males, 31 percent females, 30 percent college students, and 31 percent permanently employed appeared to show a *favorable* overall attitude, while none of the subjects in the sample reflected a *strongly favorable* over-all attitude.

The following general conclusions were formulated:

(1) Summaries of the stated attitudes indicated that 70 percent of the females

who had participated in girls' team sports did believe that they had experienced some type of carry-over value. Male participants in inter-school team sports expressed attitudes that seem to reveal a similar belief that there are recognizable carry-over values which can be traced to participation in football, basketball, track, and wrestling.

(2) Both the male and female segments of the sample, while indicating attitudes that appear to favor an expansion of the cocurricular program to include more individually centered sports and activities, did in no substantial way disclose attitudes that would suggest any curtailment of the current emphasis that is placed on highly specialized interschool team sports.

Cocurricular participation as a factor in college success was evident in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article (1985). College admissions officers could improve their chances of recruiting students who will succeed at their institutions by selecting applicants whose high school records show "persistent and successful extracurricular accomplishments." Students with such records in high school often demonstrated both strong campus leadership and significant individual accomplishments in college. Academic success in college, however, is still best predicted by class rank in high school and by admissions test scores. The findings were based on a survey of 3,676 members of the 1983 graduating class at nine private colleges. The study also found that a student's cocurricular record, no matter how strong, did not outweigh academic performance in predicting success in college. Academic skill was best predicted by examining six measures of high school performance: class rank, SAT scores, honors, cocurricular involvement, school references, and the quality of the applicant's essay.

The long-term effects of student participation were seen in the eventual benefits that the community reaps. Lindsay (1984) made the point that students who participated in high school were more likely to become involved in volunteerism and have a broader base of social activities as young adults.

To what extent does education affect not only short-term academic achievement, but long-term adult behavior? What influence does the process of cocurricular participation of high school seniors have on their social participation later as young adults?

A 1972 sample of seniors in public and private high schools in the 50 states and District of Columbia, stratified to represent various geographic regions, the degree of urbanization, income levels, school size, types of control (public and private), and ethnic backgrounds was used in this study. The respondents were surveyed again in 1973, 1974, 1976, and 1979.

The central hypothesis of the study—that higher participation in school activities is associated with high participation in voluntary social activities as young adults—was confirmed and found to be a somewhat more powerful influence than the next most important determinant of young adult participation, educational attainment. In short, students who participate in

cocurricular activities during high school are more likely to participate in a broad range of social activities as young adults.

High school activity participation was determined more by high school size than by each of the other variables in the model: family SES, academic ability, gender, sociability, curriculum track, and rank in class. Several other studies have found no evidence that participation in athletics either enhances or hinders academic work. They do find that participation in other types of cocurricular activities enhances academic performance, the likelihood of attending college, and social participation while in college. Women participate more than men in all activities, except athletics and hobby clubs. The greatest participation for both sexes is in athletics. Students of higher SES and of higher academic ability are more likely to participate in most activities (with the exception of athletics and hobby clubs).

Gender (being female) and class rank have small (negative) direct effects on young adult participation. The results of this study also reinforced earlier findings that students at smaller schools are more likely to participate in cocurricular activities.

There was empirical evidence that years of schooling accounted for differences in a wide range of leisure behavior. It was probable that more experience in school or college leads to the development of more skills and interests that might be expressed in voluntary activities.

Last, community size had an effect similar to school size: the smaller the community, the greater the social pressure to be involved in its activities. However, there was contradictory evidence indicating that community size has little or no effect on social participation as found in this study. Sociability, an individual's predisposition to participate in voluntary activities, also affects participation in high school and in the community as young adults—in a positive manner.

Leadership within the community was also affected according to Marks (1958). The problem of this study was stated in the form of a question: "What is the relationship of leadership roles occupied in high school to leadership roles occupied during the first 10 postgraduate years and what are the possible implications for the improvement of education for leadership?" A study was made of the files of 100 students who had been elected to the most important offices in Highland Park High School, Tex., and North Dallas High School, Tex. To deserve the title of high school leader the student must have held a minimum of three important elective offices.

Leaders were found to be superior to non-leaders in academic achievement. They also received a greater number of advanced or professional college degrees. (The number of leaders and non-leaders employed while attending high school and college was about evenly divided.) Leaders occupied many more college and community leadership roles.

The study concluded that since leaders did hold more community leadership offices than did non-leaders, there is a relationship between leadership experiences in high school and leadership participation.

What Does the Community Say?

As the community was positively affected, in turn, the community itself (in two Gallup polls) viewed student participation in cocurricular activities as important.

Both the 16th and the 17th annual polls of The Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Gallup, 1984, 1985), posed the same question concerning cocurricular activities. The sample used in this survey embraced a total of 1,515 adults (18 years of age and older), and was described as a modified probability sample of the United States. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in all areas of the United States and in all types of communities. The 1984 poll found that the number of Americans who feel that cocurricular activities are very important to a young person's education has dropped from 45 percent in 1978 to 31 percent today.

About three-quarters of the American public (77 percent) feel that cocurricular activities are either "very important" or "fairly important" to a young person's education. At the same time, however, there has been a decline in the percentage of those who say that cocurricular activities are "very important"—from 45 percent in 1978 to 31 percent in 1984. During the same period there has been an increase in the percentage of the public who say that cocurricular activities are "not too important"—from 9 percent to 18 percent.

Better educated Americans were more inclined to feel that cocurricular activities are important. A total of 84 percent of those who have attended college say that these activities are "very important" or "fairly important," while only 68 percent of those whose education ended with grade school regard such activities as important.

The question:

> I'd like your opinion about cocurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, and the school paper. How important are these to a young person's education—very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

	National Totals	*No Children In School*	*Public School Parents*	*Non-Public School Parents*
Very important	31%	31%	32%	30%
Fairly important	46%	45%	48%	52%
Not too important	18%	18%	16%	14%
Not at all important	4%	4%	3%	3%
No opinion	1%	2%	1%	1%

	NATIONAL TOTALS	
	1984	*1978*
Very important	31%	45%
Fairly important	46%	40%
Not too important	18%	9%
Not at all important	4%	4%
No opinion	1%	2%

About 8 Americans in 10 felt that cocurricular activities were important to a young person's education—roughly the same percentage as in the two previous surveys (1984 and 1978) that dealt with this topic. Of the 80 percent in 1985 who said that cocurricular activities are important, 39 percent deemed them "very" important, and 41 percent deemed them "fairly" important.

The question:

> I'd like your opinion about cocurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, and the school newspaper. How important are these to a young person's education—very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

	National Totals	*No Children In School*	*Public School Parents*	*Non-Public School Parents*
Very important	39%	37%	44%	45%
Fairly important	41%	43%	37%	40%
Not too important	14%	14%	16%	9%
Not at all important	3%	3%	2%	4%
No opinion	3%	3%	1%	*

	NATIONAL TOTALS		
	1985	*1984*	*1978*
Very important	39%	31%	45%
Fairly important	41%	46%	40%
Not too important	14%	18%	9%
Not at all important	3%	4%	4%
No opinion	3%	1%	2%

*Less than one-half of 1%

Americans were virtually unanimous in supporting a requirement that students who participate in cocurricular activities should maintain passing grades and acceptable school attendance records. Nine respondents in 10 in every population subgroup approved of this idea.

The question:

Do you feel that high school students who participate in sports and cocurricular activities should or should not be required to maintain a minimum grade-point average and school attendance record?

	National Totals	*No Children In School*	*Public School Parents*	*Non-Public School Parents*
Should be required	91%	90%	91%	97%
Should not be required	6%	6%	7%	1%
Don't know	3%	4%	2%	2%

Even future political involvement could be determined by student involvement in high school as discussed in Lewis (1962). Students who had three or more memberships in cocurricular activities expressed a greater sense of political efficacy, belief in the legitimacy of political institutions, satisfaction with political parties, and interest and expectation of future participation in politics than students with no membership or only one or two memberships.

Students who belonged to two or more types of groups and those who belonged to groups in which the members belonged to different types of groups expressed greater interest and expectation of future participation in politics, were more open-minded about political belief systems, and had weaker political party identifications than the students who belonged to one type of group or those who belonged to groups whose members belonged to only one type of group.

Who Participates?

Who participated in student activities, why and what they participated in were important determinants to be considered. Bourgon (1967) examined two factors (sex and class rank). The Franklin High School (Livonia, Mich.) graduating class of 1966 had 740 members. The author was interested in finding out the total participation record of the class for its three-year stay at Franklin. Bourgon also wanted to compare activity participation with final, academic class rank because he had made the assumption that those students with the best grades had also participated the most in school activities. School activities included clubs, student government, drama and music organizations, and athletics. The author also assumed that more girls participated in more activities than boys, and that the highest percentage of participation would occur with girls in the top decile of class rank. Last, Bourgon was interested in determining just how many students hadn't participated at all, and how these

students were divided by sex and academic class rank. In this study, every participation in an activity, whether repeated or in different activities, was counted because each required a commitment of time and effort. Thus, a student who had been on the student council for three years would get credit for three participations.

The results supported the assumption that students who are successful academically, participate in greater numbers and in more activities than those who are less successful. There was a total of 2,093 individual student activity participations by members of the class of 1966 for an average of 4.26 per participating student during the three-year period. Although there were 391 boys in the class (compared to 349 girls), the girls participated more than boys did on the average of 2:1. Girls had 1,254 participations for an average of 4.65, while the boys had 839 participations for an average of 3.8. Of the 740 members of the class, 491 participated in at least one activity and 249 didn't participate at all. As suspected, of the 249 who didn't participate at all, the numbers increased from the top decile to the bottom (class rank), and the boys participated more than girls proportionally.

Bullock (1965) compared participants to non-participants to discover certain measurable differences between participants and non-participants in cocurricular activities. Specifically, the following questions were asked:

(1) Are participants better adjusted personally at the outset of high school and after a period of participation?
(2) Do participants earn better grades?
(3) Are participants more educationally able and intelligent?
(4) Are there any differences in physical characteristics?
(5) Are any differentials seen when length or type of participation varies or when level of enthusiasm for activities is an influence?

The study used the entire *male* population of an entering ninth-grade class in a high school located in one of the wealthier communities in the nation. One hundred two boys constituted the final measured population. The investigation lasted three semesters. Students were classified as participants or non-participants by semester. A final division classified each as having an enthusiastic or nominal interest in activities.

The conclusions to this study:

(1) There is no relation between personal school adjustment and participation in activities.
(2) Participants are not superior to non-participants in physical size, intelligence, educational development, ability, aptitude, or citizenship.
(3) Length of participation was not a significant factor.
(4) Persons engaging in combined athletic—other activities are more likely to have ascendant personalities and high levels of sociability.
(5) Type of participation does not affect measures of grades, educational development and aptitude, intelligence, or physical size.

(6) Persons engaging in combined activities are more likely to be rated higher in personal characteristics than are non-participants or athletes.
(7) Activity enthusiasts are likely to be more sociable and rated superior in personal characteristics by their teachers.
(8) Previous studies showing measured advantages to participants in adjustment, grading, or intelligence do not agree with the findings of this study.

Activities That Draw a Crowd

Activities that students participated in were illustrated in "The Mood of American Youth" (NASSP, 1984). School clubs, athletic teams, student government, and musical groups are very popular among today's students. More than 80 percent of the students surveyed reported that they had participated in some form of school-related activities during the past school year. By far, sports clubs and teams are the cocurricular activities that involve the largest number of students. Nearly half the students reported some involvement with their school's athletic program. Although sports are by far the most popular type of cocurricular activities, organized music pursuits also engage a large number of today's students. The most frequently reported cocurricular activity was membership in a school band or orchestra. A little more than a fifth of the students said they played in school bands and orchestras, and another 17 percent sang in school choirs or choruses.

SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Activities	*% All*	*% Males*	*% Females*
1. Athletic Teams/Clubs	48.2	54.3	43.0
2. Band/Orchestra	20.7	20.9	20.4
3. Choir/Choral Groups	17.6	9.1	24.9
4. Career-Oriented Clubs	15.2	10.2	19.5
5. Language Clubs	12.0	8.5	15.0
6. Drama/Theater	11.8	8.0	15.0
7. Pep Club	11.7	6.2	16.4
8. School Publications	11.5	9.6	13.1
9. Student Council/Government	10.6	5.6	15.0
10. Service/Volunteer Groups	10.2	6.2	13.7
11. National Honor Society	7.9	7.8	7.9
12. Other Honorary Societies	6.7	4.7	8.5
13. Debate/Speech	6.6	4.9	8.1
14. Cheerleading	5.8	0.5	10.4
15. Science Clubs	5.2	6.2	4.2
16. None	17.7	20.5	15.2

Why Do Students Participate?

Factors that determined why students participated in activities were investigated by Allen and Gansneder (1976). A sample of principals in all 50 states found that the following elements were most likely to determine the effectiveness of the student activity programs in secondary schools today:

(1) Faculty commitment
(2) Relevant activities
(3) Student interest
(4) Financing
(5) Administrative support.

Involvement in student activities may also be affected by the distance students live from school. Some students may live too far away from school to participate in activities. Straley, in his study of transported and non-transported senior high school boys, concluded that transported students seem to be limited (to some extent) in opportunities to participate in cocurricular activities. The degree to which activities are relevant may also affect participation. Students and teachers rated the educational value of student activities similarly. Both groups rated the activity program of their schools as being above average in meeting youth needs pertaining to socialization, mental health, reasoning ability, guidance, and further preparation for future education.

In summary, the literature suggested some major factors that may influence students' feelings about and participation in activity programs. These were faculty commitment, economic factors, race of sponsors, ratio of black and white students, rules for selection of membership, distance from school, academic restriction for membership, relevance of the opposite race, and administrative support for the activity program.

This study found that, in general, students felt their faculty was committed to student activity programs. They thought that although the cost of activities and the distance they lived from school were not a problem for them, these things could be a problem for some students. They did not disagree with rules for selection of membership but they did feel that students had little power to change activities, that "cliques" in the school affect membership in activities, and that grades should not be a rule for membership in activities.

Buser and Humm's (1980) study reported findings on multiple factors such as who, in what, when, where, and why students participated. Gallup reported in 1978 that approximately half (51 percent) of the parents with children in school felt that cocurricular activities such as band, drama, sports, and the school paper were "very important" while 4 in 10 said they were "fairly important." In the same article, Gallup reported that adults responded to the question, "What subjects that you studied or experiences that

you gained in high school have you found to be most useful in later life?" Cocurricular activities were rated *fourth* among 10 subjects and experiences. Activities were exceeded in perceptions only by English, mathematics, and commercial subjects. They were rated as more important than shop, history, foreign languages, psychology, and domestic science.

Students were asked to select that which was most likely to establish status and acceptance among students. Fifty-six percent of the students indicated "active participation in cocurricular activities" and 19 percent selected "academic success by earning high grades"; 13 percent cited "active involvement in student government"; the remaining 10 percent indicated "having a car to drive to school" (7 percent), or "being a non-participant in cocurricular activities" (3 percent).

Some summary items from this study include:

1. There were approximately 300 activity titles reported in the high schools and 200 in the junior high schools in Illinois.
2. *Athletics and sports were by far the most popular cocurricular activities* in both the high schools and junior high schools in both numbers and proportions of students participating.
3. Approximately *one-third of the participants in athletics and sports were female in the high schools,* with somewhat more, 44 percent, in the junior high schools.
4. The popularity among the activity categories was similar between the high schools and junior high schools in that the most popular activities were athletically related, followed by music, and class-related clubs. The least popular, as evidenced by enrollments reported, were social-related and hobby/leisure-related activities in the high schools and social and honors-related in the junior high schools.
5. Female participation was greater than male in music, class, drama, government, honors, service, cheerleading, publications, and the social-related in both the high schools and junior high schools; the number of males exceeded that of females in the hobby/leisure-related in both the high schools and junior high schools.
6. Female and male high school students participated in cocurricular activities to about the same extent, although in different areas.
7. The number of high school students who participated in cocurricular activities decreased as school size increased in most categories, particularly in the athletic, music, and class-related areas.
8. Team sports, typically interscholastic, had appreciably more participants than individual or intramural sports in both the high schools and junior high schools.
9. The frequency of meetings was similar in the high schools and junior high schools with activity categories typically meeting weekly or more frequently. Honors-related activities typically met monthly.

The Non-Participants

Even though many perceive student activities as significant, the problem of "under-participation" was discussed by Long and others (1977). One of three students in this nationwide study said that cocurricular activities were more important than their courses. In addition, student participation in activities was perceived by students as an important way to establish status and acceptance by fellow students. However, a significant number of students were *not* participating in the activities they would like to. Three of 10 students characterized themselves as inactive, 3 of 10 administrators described the attitude of students as indifferent or unsatisfactory, and 4 of 10 sponsors reported that their student body's attitude toward activities was apathetic.

Three of four administrators said that under-participation was a greater problem than over-participation. A significant portion of students had never participated in school government (66 percent), school service (80 percent), or community-related activities (80 percent). But even more significant was the number of students who would have liked to but had not participated in school government (20 percent), community-oriented activities (17 percent), or hobby/leisure-related activities (21 percent).

Leadership and Student Activities

After the examination of the importance of student activities, the issue of student leadership and its correlation to student activities should be addressed. Indeed, what are the characteristics of student leaders? Hynes, Richardson, and Asher (1979) reported on such characteristics. This study investi ated 13 predictors of self-reported high school leadership. The leadership characteristics of males and females were found to be similar. Results of this study characterized the high school leader as mature, interested in business management, self-confident, socially sensitive, vigorous, and having high socioeconomic status. Cognitive values were not found to be significant predictors of leadership. The sample for this study consisted of a sample of Project TALENT participants—namely, those students who were high school seniors in 1960 and who are members of the 4 percent sample of participants for whom complete item response data have been retained. In all, there were 2,923 students included in this study.

The effects of leadership or the lack of it was brought to issue by Zanella (1979). Student leadership is an essential part of the secondary school environment. Student leadership is also quickly slipping into oblivion. Despite the best efforts of principals and teachers everywhere, students today are shunning leadership and its inherent responsibilities. A variety of reasons cause students to avoid leadership responsibilities, including peer pressure against aspiring student leaders, the numerous popular recreational activities that need

no student leadership, and the decreasing leadership demands placed on students by our schools and society in general.

The indirect effect of diminishing student leadership is long-lasting and will plague our society for years to come. If our schools do not serve as a staging and developmental area for leadership qualities, the future will be served by less-qualified and more poorly prepared individuals who take longer to assume leadership and who cannot cope well with societal problems. There are strong, hard-working student leaders in our schools today, but they are not numerous. School officials must continue to support these individuals while working to enlarge their number.

The need for leadership training is apparent and the responsibility for it lies with the schools. A case for such training was made by Emmerich (1983). Today's high school students are becoming more and more responsible, both individually and collectively. Not only do they perform leadership tasks in clubs and student government, but they are also capable of assuming leadership roles in conjunction with the faculty and administration. In this program the leadership training program developed for both elementary and secondary students had four priority skill areas: self-assessment, communication, organization and planning, and decision making.

Benefits of the training sessions have been far-reaching. Not only did trainers expand their social circles across cultural and economic levels, but they also developed resource networks among their peers. While learning practical leadership techniques, they also experienced positive relationships with adult leaders that gave them greater self-esteem and encouraged them to use their ideas in the future.

The author noted the following:

1. The level of interest and enthusiasm for leadership training was higher for sixth and seventh graders than for eighth graders.
2. Many elementary school students were willing to take (and capable of taking) more active leadership roles but many administrators and teachers were unwilling to give them the opportunity.
3. There is a high correlation between self-esteem and the exercise of leadership, and building self-esteem was an important way to foster potential leaders.
4. Three schools (of 12) without a forum for student government prior to the program started one afterward.
5. A workshop training program of this type was most effective for students with diverse geographic, economic, and cultural groups and schools.

Varied forms of leadership training programs for student leaders were reported by Vornberg et al. (1983). Two-thirds of the surveyed schools have some type of training for student leaders. Most popular were statewide workshops oriented toward student councils, in which 55.4 percent of the schools participated. Twenty-nine percent had one-day workshops for leaders, and 22 percent had an ongoing class throughout the semester. Fourteen per-

cent participated in a national workshop. Significantly, one-third of the schools had no formal leadership training for student leaders. Schools were surveyed in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.

What Can Administrators Do?

Administrators as well as student leaders need assistance in learning how to work together to ensure the utmost productivity and success. "How To Work with Student Leaders To Meet School and Student Goals" (NASSP, 1987) provided a list of strategies. Student activities programs can provide many opportunities for student growth in communication, problem solving, decision making, and leadership. As they work with administrators to meet the goals of schools and individuals, student leaders enjoy the satisfaction of taking part in school policy making. At the same time, administrators receive valuable input from students and help them to sharpen their communication and decision-making skills.

Administrators should help students meet their individual and student group goals by using the following strategies:

1. Require student leaders to formulate and file with an administrator, the goals and objectives of each group activity.
2. Train student leaders in group process techniques that encourage group members to become involved in decision making.
3. Help student leaders develop and adhere to program budgets.
4. Support requirements that membership in service organizations be based on demonstrated service to the school or community rather than on student popularity.
5. Encourage student leaders to arrange, plan, conduct, and participate in the evaluation of student programs such as assemblies, voter registration drives, and blood donation drives.
6. Provide opportunities for student leaders and activity sponsors to participate in regional, state, and national leadership growth programs.
7. Assist student leaders whose group's programs fall short of their purpose by working with them on improvements.

In "This We Believe," NASSP encompassed the key factors discussed throughout this document.

Student activities are a vital part of secondary education. The opportunities for students to organize and plan, to assume leadership roles, to gain recognition and identity, to experience self-governance, to recreate physically and emotionally, and to mature socially come, to a significant degree, from the student activities program. Observers have long argued that the participation of youth in various activities develops talents, maturity, and responsibility. The accomplishments of adults are significantly correlated to their "nonacademic" experiences as students in school. Thus, student activities are of extraordinary importance to the later and serious realm of adulthood.

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